

Members:

Rep. Robert Kuzman, Chair
Rep. Vern Tincher
Rep. Gloria Goeglein
Rep. Matt Whetstone
Sen. Becky Skillman, V. Chair
Sen. Steve Johnson
Sen. Rose Antich
Sen. Vi Simpson



Lay Members

Garland Ferrell
Frank Fritch
Margaret Tucker
Vernon Jewell
Douglas Lechner
Gloria Stephani
Bill Mansard
Jean Paul Lushin
John Catey
Al Dillon
Richard Dodge

COUNTY GOVERNMENT STUDY COMMISSION

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MEETING MINUTES

Authority: P.L. 109-1997

Meeting Date: July 17, 1998
Meeting Time: 10:00 A.M.
Meeting Place: State House, 200 W. Washington St., Room 404
Meeting City: Indianapolis, Indiana
Meeting Number: 1

Members Present: Rep. Gloria Goeglein; Sen. Steven Johnson; Sen. Rose Antich; Sen. Vi Simpson; Garland Ferrell; Frank Fritch; Bill Mansard; Jean Paul Lushin; John Catey; Richard Dodge.

Members Absent: Rep. Robert Kuzman, Chair; Rep. Vern Tincher; Rep. Matt Whetstone; Sen. Becky Skillman, Vice-Chair; Margaret Tucker; Vernon Jewell; Douglas Lechner; Gloria Stephani; Al Dillon.

Rep. Goeglein, Acting Chair, called the meeting to order and asked Commission members to introduce themselves.

Commission Charge

Beverly Holloway, Fiscal Analyst for the Commission, stated that the Indiana General Assembly enacted legislation (P.L. 109-1997) directing the County Government Study Commission to study the following:

- (1) How to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of county government by examining the functions and duties associated with all elected county officials and departments of county government. The Commission shall focus on how these functions and duties relate to the functions and duties of other elected county officials, departments of county government, and other state and local governmental entities.
- (2) The functions and duties of elected county officials and departments of county government that should be more clearly defined by statute to avoid disputes over allocation of power in county government.
- (3) The functions and duties of elected county officials and departments of county government that should be eliminated, altered, or reassigned to other elected county officials, departments of county government, or other state or local governmental entities.

- (4) The functions and duties of county commissioners in Lake County and St. Joseph County and how their legislative and executive powers compare to county commissioners in other counties.

Ms. Holloway also gave a summary of the work completed by the Commission in the 1997 interim.

Public Testimony

Mr. Nick Pasyanos, Director of Legislative Services, Association of Indiana Counties (AIC), stated that the AIC has been doing a lot of work with the county task force members, which include county, township and municipal representatives. Mr. Pasyanos stated that discussions with county task force members revealed that many local officials do not understand the roles and responsibilities of other local officials.

Mr. Matt Brooks, Director of Member Services and Legislative Liaison, AIC, stated that dialogue is to continue among the county task force members and that the AIC will provide updates to the Commission.

Commission Member Discussion

The following thoughts were expressed during Commission member discussion:

- (1) The Commission expires June 30, 2001. The charges of the Commission need to be addressed during the next three years rather than waiting until the year 2001.
- (2) Discussion of the judiciary and the judicial branch. The Commission members expressed a specific interest in whether judiciary employees should be state employees and the judicial system state-funded or if the system should remain as it is with judiciary employees being county employees and the judicial system funded through local property taxes.
- (3) The function of townships in today's government.
- (4) Placing the welfare programs under a separate county tax levy.
- (5) The current county, township and municipal government structure is not designed to handle the functions being passed down from the federal and state governments. The local governmental structure needs to be re-designed.

The Commission members suggested the following agenda items for the next meeting of the County Government Study Commission:

- (1) Progress report from the Association of Indiana Counties on the county task force.
- (2) Update report from the Metropolitan Association of Greater Indianapolis Communities' C.O.M.P.E.T.E. project.
- (3) Presentation from the Judges Association regarding the judiciary and the judicial branch.
- (4) Fiscal information on how much is collected in court fees, as well as the breakdown and monetary distribution of the court fees.
- (5) Report from the Governor's Blue Ribbon Tax Commission.

With there being no further business before the Commission, Rep. Goeglein adjourned the meeting.